

## UHY launches high school recruitment initiative

By Juliette Gaudemer June 21, 2023, 10:02 a.m. EDT

UHY Advisors debuted its Junior Connect recruitment program, an initiative designed for high school students interested in pursuing an accounting degree and career.

The initiative comes in response to the decline in enrollment for accounting degrees, by providing students with mentorship and networking opportunities during a half-day experience.

"The battle for talent within the accounting space is incredibly fierce, and with an aging workforce and shrinking incoming graduate pipeline, it is clear that the industry needs to get creative and rethink the ways it appeals to the next generation of STEM and business professionals," said UHY CEO Steven McCarty in a statement. "The Junior Connect program does just that by introducing students to the modern accounting field and providing them with key learning and networking opportunities as they begin to consider their potential career path and college major."

UHY's Junior Connect will be partnering with high schools nationwide to identify students interested in STEM careers. The first event occurred in partnership with Rochester Community Schools and Novi Community Schools on June 14 at UHY's Farmington Hills, Michigan office.

The new initiative is an outgrowth of UHY's original Connect Program, which the firm has been running for more than a decade with older students. Junior Connect has the goal of identifying talent earlier in their academic journey as the talent pool keeps shrinking. With guidance from UHY's CEO, the firm pulled together this new program and targeted two large districts in Southeast Michigan, with Great Lakes being the pilot location.

After an open forum highlighting different practices and a lunch with students, UHY experts and former Connect participants discussed what it means to choose accounting as a major, how to navigate change in a business landscape, and the various career paths available in the field.

"The beauty of the program is that it helps us identify talent prior to the chaos of the following season," said Rina Henning, director of campus recruiting. "Additionally, it breaks down the negative connotation associated with accounting and increases

exposure for students to truly see the diversity of workloads and people they're going to be working with in the future."

Accompanied by an audit manager, Henning gave a presentation in those two high schools that focused on raising awareness about public accounting and college majors. After the presentation, students were given the opportunity to ask questions, and teachers introduced those who were most interested in the field, so they could share why they wanted to become accountants or join the Junior Connect program.

"It's really important that we start identifying talent a bit earlier, and I would encourage everybody to do this kind of initiative, whether you all come together and host a large event or start doing things progressively," said Henning. "Far too often over the years, students are so confused with what major to declare that these types of initiatives can help by bringing them to your own facility."

The Michigan schools asked the firm to come back next year for more presentations and invited it to join the advisory board in the Rochester district to have a look at the curriculum.

As part of the program, UHY Junior Connect participants receive the following:

- Intro to UHY: Formal introduction to UHY and the broader business of accounting today.
- Inside Accounting Guidebook: Presented by UHY team members, this session provides a detailed look into the day-to-day workflows in the modern accounting industry, various roles as an accountant, and what to expect as an accounting major.
- Partner one-on-ones: Presentations from UHY partners on their roles and growth within the accounting industry as well as networking opportunities.